

March 12, 2015

Environmental Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) 2014 Annual Report (January 1-December 31, 2014)

First established by the Mayor and Council in 2001 as a Solid Waste Advisory Committee, the responsibilities of the Environmental Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) have been expanded and since 2005 include advising the Mayor and Council on all Environmental Services Department (ES) programs and services.

ESAC has 13 voting members that represent residents or businesses within Tucson. Six members are nominated by the City Manager, and one member is appointed by the Mayor and each member of the Council (attachment 1). The full committee met 9 times in 2014.

Four subcommittees continued to review ES programs and services. These subcommittees are Finance; Environmental Engineering; Collections, Recycling, and Public Information; and Waste Diversion. In February 2014 the Waste Diversion Subcommittee merged with the Collections, Recycling, and Public Information Subcommittee to create the Waste Diversion, Education, and Collections Subcommittee.

ESAC is responsible for providing an “Annual Report to the Governing Body on the operations of Environmental Services.” This Annual Report summarizes ESAC’s activities for the calendar year 2014 in the following areas:

- Financial Planning, including review of ES operating and capital budgets and revenue sources
- Review of the Cost of Service model used to determine rates and fees
- Waste Diversion
- Environmental Engineering

Financial Planning

The ESAC Finance Subcommittee met on seven occasions in 2014. The committee’s responsibility is to “review periodic expenditure reports and the formulation of the annual budget as it is prepared and submitted to the Mayor and Council.”

The sub-committee reviewed the quarterly expenditure reports and the preliminary close out for FY 2014. The subcommittee also reviewed the FY 2015 Operating Budget consisting of both expenditures and revenues. Additionally the subcommittee reviewed the working capital of the ES Fund and the FY 2015-2019 Capital Improvement program.

Cost of Service Model and Rates and Fees

The Finance Subcommittee also reviewed the Cost of Service Model. This model is used by the ES staff to make recommendations on rates. The subcommittee reviewed the proposed changes to the City

Code Chapter 15 and made recommendations to full ESAC regarding rates and the changes to Chapter 15.

Waste Diversion

The Tucson Mayor and Council initially established ESAC to oversee the implementation of the Blue Barrel Recycling program. Even as the responsibilities of ESAC have grown to an advisory body for Environmental Services, waste diversion and efficient management of the daily environmental needs of Tucson residents and businesses, including collection of solid and recyclable waste, have been priorities for the committee and the Waste Diversion, Education, and Collections subcommittee. The Waste Diversion, Education, and Collections subcommittee met eight times in 2014, and special, ad-hoc Waste Diversion Subcommittee met three times before the subcommittees were combined.

The ad-hoc Waste Diversion Subcommittee met to review the Waste Diversion Recommendations report created by Cascadia, a consulting firm contracted by Environmental Services. This subcommittee reviewed the substantial study prepared by Cascadia and made eight recommendations to ESAC with the intention of presenting these recommendations to the Mayor and Council. The report prepared by Cascadia was found to be inadequate in both diversion goals and actions. A more thorough report was reviewed by the Waste Diversion, Education, and Collections Subcommittee, and recommendations were brought to ESAC at the beginning of 2015.

The subcommittee has had regular updates on the collection of waste and recyclables, as well as brush and bulky pick up. The department has begun a transition to all CNG trucks and plans to build a slow filling station are underway. The department has also made a renewed effort this year to train drivers and operators to operate their trucks on the streets and will continue to train all drivers and operators on a more regular basis.

The subcommittee has begun to review recycling data on a quarterly basis and receives information collected from quarterly audits at the Materials Recovery Facility. While the blue barrel recycling program continues to be well managed, the committee feels further efforts need to be made by the department to determine the source of contaminants in materials collected for recycling and reduce the 20% contamination rate substantially.

The subcommittee has also continued to monitor the Household Hazardous Waste program, and is pleased with ongoing success of the program. The subcommittee reported to the full committee that the services provided by this program are accessible to residents and made available to non-residents at a fair and necessary fee.

Public Outreach provides needed support for Environmental Services many services. The subcommittee receives and reviews materials published by the department to inform the public of current services, or best practices to reducing waste. We believe an even greater emphasis on educating the public on diversion efforts and available resources provided by the department would benefit the department and are necessary to meet future diversion goals of the department and the City of Tucson.

Environmental Services has made significant progress in diversion through changes in Chapter 15 of the Tucson City Code, giving the department additional data provided to them through commercial haulers and recyclers, and through the Food Waste Collection Pilot Program. The subcommittee has monitored the pilot program, reported to the full committee, and made recommendations as the program expands. The subcommittee fully supports this program and praises the department for its ongoing relationship with Compost Cats.

Environmental-Engineering

The Environmental-Engineering subcommittee met on four occasions in 2014. The committee's responsibility is to "review matters related to capital construction and engineering projects in the department."

The subcommittee reviewed the Capital Improvement Program for FY 2016-2020 including the Silverbell Pump and Treat project, which will treat contaminated groundwater and provide a resource to the Tucson Water reclaimed system. Staff provided a presentation on the acquisition of properties for development of a new buffer at the Los Reales landfill.

The subcommittee reviewed the construction related to the Los Reales Planned Area Development for the first phase of construction. It was also briefed on progress of the new Price Center Compressed Natural Gas facility. The Pima County Flood Control District bank protection work at the Ryland landfill was discussed. In addition staff presented the Kolb Road extension project over the Los Reales landfill.

The Environmental Services Advisory Committee members thank the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve the community and support the efforts of the Environmental Services Department. This Committee feels the department is well managed and working diligently to secure a strong future for the City of Tucson both financially and environmentally.